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Career Development Issues Affecting Secondary Schools

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Career development is a lifelong process that can be fostered through education programs at all levels. Judging by the enormous amount of information addressing every phase of career development, it is surely a priority to most Americans! Career information and advice are everywhere–the Internet, bookstores, colleges, universities, public schools, public and private agencies, the corporate world, the military, newspapers and magazines, professional journals, prisons, and even signs on city buses!

During the last decade, legislation at both the national and state levels placed an emphasis on assisting young people in making successful transitions from school to the next step in life and to a career. As a result, more resources have been developed and marketed to educators. Despite the abundance of resources on career development, the literature and interactions with educators indicate there are still areas needing clarification or further attention. This paper draws from literature on research and best practices as well as the wisdom of practitioners and leaders in the field in order to focus on these career development issues affecting secondary schools. They include the following:

- Clarification of career development terms
- Delivery of career development programs
- Resources that support program development and improvement
- Evidence of program effectiveness

The intended audience includes all secondary school educators and others with interest in the subject.

Clarification of Career Development Terms

In order to establish well-articulated, comprehensive career development programs, the terms must be well defined and understood. Yet, there is little clarity reflected in the literature and in conversation with school counselors throughout the nation. Key terms such as career development, career education, career guidance, and career counseling are often interchanged (Cunanan and Maddy-Bernstein 1994) as are the more basic terms "guidance" and "counseling" (Myrick 1997). This confusion is certainly not a recent problem. In 1988, Halasz concluded: "Career development, career education, and career guidance are distinct but related terms…Yet, it was not always possible to distinguish the differences in the literature. As an issue, terminology will continue to frustrate those who understand that the differences are not merely semantic" (p. 21).

The confusion in terminology is rooted in history. The first school guidance programs, early in the 20th Century, were primarily based on "vocational guidance." By the 1950s and 1960s, a clinical-services school model emerged, which focused on the psychological needs of students (Gysbers and Henderson 2000). As school counselors embraced the psychological/clinical-services model, the preferred name for their program became *counseling*, probably because they believed it to be more descriptive of their vision of a clinical model for the program. Today, according to the American School Counselor Association (1997), counseling is *one* of several counselor interventions in a comprehensive guidance program (the others include consultation, coordination, and group guidance). Although counseling in only one intervention in the broad program, those in the field of school guidance most often use "counseling" to describe the whole program. Likewise, "counselor" is used to describe those who deliver the program services (e.g., the American School *Counselor* Association). In current literature, the program is most frequently called the "school counseling program" or the "school guidance and counseling program." Although "counseling" may not accurately describe the whole program or the work of the persons primarily responsible for delivering the program, the term has become widely accepted and apparently will continue to be used.

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The following definitions are widely used in the literature. They have been endorsed by professional organizations and should serve as a guide to educators seeking clarification.

Career development is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, education, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total lifespan of any given individual.

Career is the totality of work—paid and unpaid—one does in one's lifetime. (National Career Development Association 1993, p. 2).

Career Education is an effort aimed at refocusing American education and the actions of the broader community in ways that will help individuals acquire and utilize the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for each to make work a meaningful, productive and satisfying part of his or her way of living. (Hoyt 1981, p. 9)

Guidance is the "umbrella term" that encompasses a constellation of services aimed at personal and career development and school adjustment. These services are commonly delivered by professional educators, such as teachers or counselors, although other support personnel may be involved. (Myrick 1997, p. 2)

Guidance also can be described as an instructional process in which a student is given information and told how to move progressively toward a personal goal. (Myrick 1997, p. 3)

Counseling is used by people in the counseling profession to describe a special type of helping process….Rather than rely on general interpretations of information or behaviors, counseling focuses more on personal awareness, interest, attitudes, and goals. It has a philosophical and theoretical base that conceptualizes learning, human behaviors, and interpersonal relationships. Counseling is considered a professional endeavor by a professionally trained and certified person. (Myrick 1997, p. 3)

Thus, **career guidance** is the portion of the guidance program designed to assist students in their career development, and **career counseling** is the portion of the guidance program involving *counseling* students concerning their career development.

Why the fuss over terminology? Clarity is needed in order for school faculty, administrators, researchers, parents, students, and community members to understand the guidance program (including the career guidance component). Furthermore, a common terminology is needed for accountability and for outcomes to be measured. When there is a lack of clarity (and articulation), expectations are unclear and outcomes difficult to measure or compare to others. School counselors have traditionally been expected to fulfill diverse—and often conflicting—roles such as counselor, administrator, disciplinarian, scheduler, consultant, and many others. Clarification of terminology is basic to good articulation of program goals and counselors' work.

Delivery of Career Development Programs

Who is responsible for career development programs in schools? Clearly, the delivery of a comprehensive career development program in secondary schools should not—and probably cannot—be the total responsibility of the counselor. In reality, most school counselors have limited time to be the sole providers of career assistance, given the number of students they are have to serve. Although the American School Counselor Association recommends a counselor-student ratio of 1:250, the national average is 1:561 (Meyer 2000). Beyond the time factor, to provide a comprehensive, developmental career assistance program serving every student requires involvement from most faculty and staff members (Kobylarz 1996; Maddy-Bernstein and Matias 1999; National School-to-Work Office 1996). According to Kobylarz (1996) a career development program–

- Is identifiable but integrated with other programs within the institution.
- Enhances the career development knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals by establishing program standards.
- Uses coordinated activities designed to support individual achievement of the standards.
- Supports the delivery of services through qualified leadership; diversified staffing; adequate facilities, materials, and financial resources; and effective management. (pp. 2-4)

Resources that Support Career Development Programs in Secondary Schools

For educators to assist young people in their career development is by no means a novel concept. Indeed, career (vocational) guidance was the foundation of the earliest school guidance programs (Gysbers and Henderson 2000; Zunker 1998). Although the emphasis on vocational/career has wavered from time to time during the 20th Century, some focus has always remained. More recently, several occurrences have again brought career development to the forefront in education. The following have been influential in placing a renewed emphasis on the need to assist young people in their career development *and* have given the field resources that greatly assist in program implementation:

- *The National Career Development Guidelines*
- *The National Standards for School Counseling Programs*
- *The School-to-Work Opportunities Act*

The Guidelines

In the late 1980s, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC), in cooperation with leading professional, technical, career, and guidance organizations and the U.S. Department of Education, established national guidelines to serve as a framework for program development and improvement. The National Career Development Guidelines initiative was a far-reaching effort led by a panel of nationally recognized experts in the field and business representatives. The panel served as project

planners, reviewers, and evaluators to identify the competencies, which are broad goals addressing career development needs of people at different life stages. Extensive field tests were conducted to validate the guidelines. The final product, *National Career Development Guidelines K-Adult*, provides competencies needed by individuals at various life stages (i.e., elementary, middle/junior, secondary, and adult) in three major areas of development: self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning (Kobylarz 1996). The guidelines also contain recommended personnel requirements, organizational capabilities, and recommended steps to implementation. To help ensure widespread adoption of the Guidelines, a nationwide training program was implemented and extensive training materials were developed. To date, the guidelines have been widely endorsed by most states and dominate information in the literature on the topic.

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs

More recently, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) conducted a study to identify components that should be included in national standards for K-12 school counselors (Dahir, Sheldon, and Valiga 1998). As a result, ASCA developed national standards for K-12 programs that address three areas of student development: academic, personal/social, and career (Campbell and Dahir 1997). (See Table 1.)

To ensure understanding and appropriate use of the standards, ASCA also developed an extensive training program and produced training materials. According to Dahir (C. A. Dahir, personal communication, May 14, 2000), 26 states have incorporated the standards into their state school guidance program, two states have crosswalked them with the academic learning standards, and two other states have crosswalked them with their state guidance model. She also notes that a number of university counselor education programs are now using the standards.

Table 1. ASCA Standards

A. Academic

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.
Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

B. Career Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.
Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.
Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

C. Personal/Social Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.
Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.
Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

(Dahir, Sheldon, and Valiga 1998)

Comparison of ASCA Standards and the NOICC Guidelines

It may appear the National Guidelines for Career Development and the National Standards for School Counseling Programs are two different models that compete for the time of school personnel. In reality, they are very similar. Consider the following broad areas each addresses.

The guidelines address "self-knowledge," whereas the standards focus on "personal/social development." The guidelines' "self-knowledge" competencies emphasize a positive self-concept, skills to interact positively with others, and understanding developmental changes and transitions (Kobylarz 1996). Similarly, the ASCA personal/social standards focus on respecting self and others, making decisions, and safety and survival (see Table 2).

Furthermore, the ASCA Standards and the NOICC Guidelines' indicators have many similarities (see Table 3). For example, where the guidelines stress interacting positively by respecting feelings and beliefs of others, the standards emphasize respecting alternative viewpoints.

Table 2. Comparison of the General Areas of the NOICC Guidelines and the ASCA Standards

National Career Development Guidelines	National School Counseling Standards
Self-knowledge	Personal/social
Educational and occupational exploration	Academic
Career planning	Career

The ASCA Standards for a guidance program and the NOICC Guidelines for K-12 students are both designed to assist individuals in becoming productive citizens who can plan wisely and make good decisions in all areas of their lives. Schools that wish to develop new programs or improve existing programs may adopt or adapt either the guidelines or the standards, depending on the school's needs, resources, and preferences. Both have been widely adopted and both have a professional development program to ensure their acceptance and appropriate implementation.

Developmental, Comprehensive Guidance Programs. The interest in comprehensive, developmental school guidance programs is another reason for renewed emphasis on career development programs. Such programs are designed to benefit *all students* in their journey through school and in preparation for the future (Maddy-Bernstein and Matias 1999) and focus on the personal/social, academic, and career development needs. According to Gysbers and Henderson (2000), comprehensive guidance programs—

> …are developmental in that guidance activities are conducted on a regular, planned, and systematic basis to assist students to achieve competencies.…are comprehensive in that a full range of activities and services, such as assessment, information, consultation, counseling referral, placement, follow-up, and follow-through, are provided. (p. 26)

The comprehensive guidance program is the responsibility of the entire school staff. Although professionally certified school counselors deliver services directly to students, they must also work in collaboration and consulting roles with staff, parents, and others in the community who also provide guidance services to students (Gysbers and Henderson 2000; Lapan, Gysbers, and Sun 1997; Myrick 1997).

Myrick (1997) outlined seven principles of developmental guidance programs. Developmental guidance—

1. is for all students.
2. has an organized and planned curriculum.
3. is sequential and flexible.
4. is an integrated part of the total educational process.
5. involves all school personnel.
6. helps students learn more effectively and efficiently.
7. includes counselors who provide specialized counseling services and interventions.

According to Gysbers, Lapan, and Blair (1999), there are two criteria for comprehensive programs:

- there must be a written program that has been adopted by the school board, and
- counselors at all levels must devote their time to the program, not administrative, clerical, and other nonguidance tasks.

Table 3. Similarities between the National Career Development Guidelines and the National Standards for School Counseling Programs

National Career Development Guidelines

Area: Self-Knowledge
Competency II:
- Skills to interact positively with others.
- Demonstrate respect for the feelings and beliefs of others.
- Demonstrate understanding of different cultures, lifestyles, attitudes, and abilities.

Area: Career Planning
Competency IX:
- Skills to make decisions.
- Describe how choices are made.
- Describe how decisions affect self and others.

(Dahir, Sheldon, and Valiga 1998)

The National School Counseling Standards

Area: Personal/Social Development
Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals:

- Students will learn the goal setting process.
- Students will respect alternative points of view.
- Students will use a decision-making and problem-solving model.
- Students will demonstrate a respect and appreciation for individual and cultural differences.

(Kobylarz 1996)

The American School Counselor Association strongly supports the comprehensive guidance initiative, and both the National Standards and the Career Development Guidelines have facilitated the planning, implementation, and evaluation process.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act

Although other legislation has supported career development programs over the decades, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) of 1994 (P. L. 103-239) has probably had the greatest impact in the 1990s. Congress passed the STWOA as a result of a number of reports highlighting shortcomings in U.S. schools, especially in work force preparation (e.g., Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce

1990; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills 1991; William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship 1988). The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor jointly administer the mandates of the act. The STWOA will sunset in 2001, when it is expected that STW principles will be firmly in place. Funds made available through the National School-to-Work Office to establish STW programs are to have three core elements: school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities. The act's emphasis is on career exploration and awareness as well as high academic and occupational skills.

Since 1994, STW funds have also supported professional development programs that involve all stakeholders (e.g., faculty, counselors, administers, representatives of business and industry, parents and students) in the designing and day-to-day delivery of the STW programs. Although counselors are important to the movement, the act calls for the full involvement of all stakeholders in the program. Like the ASCA Standards, the NOICC Guidelines, and comprehensive guidance program models, the STW emphasis is also on broad-based *programs* fully integrated into the system, not ancillary, discrete services.

Evidence of Effectiveness

A 1995 Gallup survey sponsored by the National Career Development Association (Hoyt and Lester 1995) indicated that many Americans believe high schools should help students plan careers, develop skills to get jobs, and learn to use occupational information. The survey also revealed that 64% believe high schools should place graduates and dropouts into jobs, compared to about 33% who believe high schools need to do more to prepare students for college. Evans and Burck (1992) conducted a meta-analysis of 67 studies that showed career education has a positive effect on academic achievement. They noted that results are increased when the same students are in the program a second year.

Recently, researchers in Utah and Missouri have studied the impact of comprehensive guidance programs in their states. Their findings are a strong endorsement for these initiatives and have significant meaning for career development programs in schools.

Utah

The Utah initiative to implement the state model for guidance and counseling has been very successful. The statewide program is based on the NOICC Guidelines' student competencies and indicators. The heart of the Utah comprehensive model is student and parent involvement in development of the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP).

A study by Kimball, Gardner, and Ellison (1995) to assess the impact of Utah's comprehensive guidance program, especially the career-related services and resources, found that 74% of all Utah high schools reported parents and students were involved in the SEOP and 100% of schools reported that students complete or review their SEOP plans in 10th grade. Nelson, Fox, and Gardner (1998) examined the level of implementation of Utah's comprehensive guidance programs based on important student outcomes and characteristics. A sample of nearly 100 low and high implementation schools were closely matched based on school location, percentage of students receiving free lunches, and the size of their junior class. Teachers, administrators, and counselors were surveyed to determine key items to use in an implementation scale to judge student outcomes and high and low implementation schools. The researchers were able to access information about high school seniors from the American College Testing (ACT) Program and Utah State Office of Education databases. The findings include the following (Nelson, Fox, and Gardner 1998):

- 79% of students in high implementation schools felt they were adequately or better prepared for a job compared to 75% in lower implementation schools.
- 88% of students in high implementation schools compared to 75% in lower implementation schools felt the school prepared them for continuing their education.
- 44% compared to 37% described their high school program as college prep.
- 48% compared to 55% described their program as general.
- Course-taking patterns reflect that students in high implementation schools choose more advanced courses than in low implementation schools.
- More females in high implementation schools enroll in math and science courses.
- ACT scores of students in high implementation schools are higher in every area than their counterparts.
- Students in high implementation schools rated their guidance program and career planning services higher than those in low implementation schools.

A Utah State Office of Education (2000) report reflects a number of positive effects as a result of the comprehensive program:

- Statewide averages of counselor-pupil ratios in grades 7-12 have fallen from a high of 1:550 in 1992 to 1:375 in 1999.
- 93% of teachers reported supporting the school's Student Education Occupation Plan.
- 85% of teachers infuse career education into their regular curriculum.
- 49% of teachers devote more class time to guidance activities as a result of the comprehensive guidance program.
- 100% of counselors indicated they had been involved in professional development on performing more effectively in schools and conducting SEOP conferences; they viewed improved student planning as a very significant success of the comprehensive program.
- Counselors indicate they have more time to work directly with students.
- Career exploration resources and career centers are more available and accessible.
- Coordination with feeder schools has improved.
- District support of guidance activities has increased.

Although establishing cause and effect between the SEOP's growth and student involvement in some education opportunities is not possible, the following results seem to indicate a positive trend:

- Between 1990-91 and 1998-99, the number of students concurrently enrolled in college courses increased from 4,582 (earning 32,764 credit hours) to 19,744 (earning 124,057 credit hours).
- Between 1993-94 and 1998-99, the number of students participating in Utah's Centennial Scholarship for Early Graduation increased from 133 (receiving $24,867) to 598 (receiving $350,573).
- Advanced Placement courses increased by 54%.

Missouri

Dr. Norm Gysbers, working with colleagues in the State Department of Education, has been instrumental in training school counselors across the state to provide the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP). The MCGP is a K-12 approach that contains three broad content areas: career planning and exploration, knowledge of self and others, and education and vocational development (Gysbers, Lapan, and Blair 1999). Like Utah's model (which is adapted from Gysbers' work), the Missouri model has yielded a number of positive findings. An assessment sought to determine the following: (1) How are the structural and program components of the MCGP being implemented? (2) What is the impact of more fully implemented programs and early training on accomplishing preferred guidance tasks? and (3) Are there differences at the school level (e.g., middle, high) in the counselor's position and the ability to carry out preferred guidance tasks? Some 922 school counselors in Missouri who had participated in a MCGP training program were mailed surveys and 430 were returned. The study showed the following positive changes in guidance programs in Missouri (ibid. 1999):

- Written programs are in place.
- Local school boards have adopted the programs.
- Most structural components are in place.
- Although nonguidance tasks were reduced, they are still a barrier.
- Counselors are more visible (e.g., in classes, time with students).
- Counselors have more time for preferred tasks.
- Guidance programs are being more fully implemented.
- Counselors at all levels reported improvements but high school and middle school counselors are more visible than elementary counselors, and high school counselors are more likely to perform fill-in roles.

High Schools That Work

Schools participating in the Southern Regional Education Board's High Schools That Work (HSTW) network assess their graduating vocational completers biennially. In addition to assessing science, mathematics, and reading, they also collect data on students' course-taking patterns, behavior, and attitudes and teacher attitudes and characteristics (Kaufman, Bradby, and Teitelbaum 2000). The findings of the assessment are tied to the HSTW six *key practices*, one being involving students and their parents in a career guidance or advisement program. Among the significant correlations reported by Kaufman, Bradby, and Teitelbaum is evidence that one factor associated with gains in academic achievement is increased student contact with their counselor or teacher/advisor concerning their high school program.

Model Programs

For many years, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) has identified exemplary career guidance programs. In the mid-1990s, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education's Office of Student Services worked cooperatively with OVAE in an 18-month project to develop a research-based framework to guide the national search process. The project involved a committee of experts in the field of guidance and counseling and input and feedback from the American School Counselor Association, the Association for Career and Technical Education, and the State Supervisors of Career Guidance. To date, 28 programs at the elementary, middle, secondary, and postsecondary levels have been identified using the framework. They are meant to serve as models for others to replicate or adapt to their settings.

The exemplary programs were carefully selected to ensure they are worthy of replication. The framework for the exemplary program search used a strict research-based program evaluation and involves a two-step process. Beginning with a national call and news release about the search, applications were distributed to states that disseminated them to promising school districts or programs. A panel of national experts in the field reviewed the applications. Site visits were conducted to the highest-ranked programs in order to verify information described in the application and further understand the program through interviews with students, parents, business partners, teachers, counselors, and administrators. The framework contains three clusters of components: (1) career guidance and counseling program plan; (2) collaboration, articulation, and communication efforts; and (3) institutional support, leadership, and program evaluation (see Table 4).

Conclusion

Today, secondary schools must prepare students for postsecondary education, work with students with special needs, abate violence, prepare students for an ambiguous future work force, and much more. Evidence is mounting that an effective means of addressing all these issues may be a comprehensive guidance program that includes a strong career development component. Practical research-based programs have begun to produce information educators can use to understand and adopt such programs.

Although the emphasis on career development has wavered in the past, there are indications that it may strengthen in the 21st Century. The really good news for educators is the availability of high-quality resources to assist in program development. The National Career Development Guidelines, the American School Counselor Association, exemplary program model information available from the U.S. Department of Education, and many others not mentioned in this paper are available. However, a word of caution. Although resources are useful, they only provide information and do not build the programs students need. Only school personnel can do that.

Table 4. Components of Exemplary Career Guidance and Counseling Programs

A. Career Guidance and Counseling Program Plan

1. Assist Students/Clients in Achieving Career Development Competencies
   - 1.1 Assist Students/Clients in Increasing Self-Knowledge and Self-Advocacy
   - 1.2 Assist Students/Clients in Educational and Occupational Exploration
   - 1.3 Assist Students/Clients in Career Planning, Preparation, and Transition
2. Address the Needs of Diverse Student Populations
3. Program Support Services

B. Collaboration, Articulation, and Communication

1. Family/Parental Involvement and Support
2. Faculty/Staff Involvement in Career Guidance and Counseling Program
3. Intra- and Interagency Collaboration
4. Collaboration with Business

C. Institutional Support and Leadership

1. Institutional Support
2. Facilities
3. Financial Support
4. Guidance Personnel Qualifications
5. Professional Development

D. Program Evaluation

1. Evidence of Program Effectiveness
2. Follow-up of Program Completers and Noncompleters

Resources

Listed here are recommended basic resources to assist in planning and implementing career development programs.

Exemplary Program Information

Gisela Harkin
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Department of Education
MES Rm 4324
300 C St SW
Washington, DC 20202
Phone: 202/205-9037
gisela_harkin@ed.gov

National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Rd
Columbus, OH 43210-1090
800/678-6011; 614/292-9931; fax: 614/688-3258
ndccte@osu.edu; www.nccte.com

Standards and Competencies

American School Counselor Association
801 N Fairfax St. Ste 310
Alexandria, VA 22314
703/683-2722; 800/306-4722; fax: 703/683-1619
www.schoolcounselor.org/

National Career Development Association
4700 Reed Rd Ste M
Columbus, OH 43220
614/326-1750; fax: 614/326-1760
www.ncda.org/

Utah Model for Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance
Utah State Office of Education
250 E 500 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111

Comprehensive Guidance Model

Gysbers, Norman C., and Henderson, Patricia. ***Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program, Third Edition***. (2000). Order #72660.
American Counseling Association
5999 Stevenson Ave
Alexandria, VA 22304-3300
www.counseling.org/

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CTE National Dissemination Center
Career & Technical Education — The Ohio State University
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